

**DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Budget Forum**

**Wednesday 16th November 2016**

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| **ATTENDEES:** | Russell Bailey, Vince Browne, Cllr. Lis Burnett, Norman Craggs, Tyrone Davies, Mari Gibbs, Stephen Grech, Alec Lewis, Audrey Males, Mick Mason, Hywel Price,  Also in attendance: Carole Tyley, Nicola Monckton, Rachel Boucher |
| **APOLOGIES:** | Trevor Baker, Carole Browne, Dave Dimmick, Tim Exell, , Paula Ham, Ceri Hoffrock, Huw Jones, Kelvin Law, Martin Price |

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| **ITEM** | **ISSUE** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION REQUIRED** |
| 1. | Welcome & Apologies |  |  |
| 2. | Minutes  Matters arising | Agreed  **PDG LAC.** Schools have been underfunded on PDG LAC purely due to incorrect PLASC data. Some schools have claimed that the SIMS database has not allowed them to categorise pupils as LAC and hence the PLASC data is not accounting for all LAC pupils.  NM has advised Headteachers to ensure PLASC is thoroughly checked and to contact Sean Graville in the ICT section if schools are experiencing any difficulties with SIMS. Please can all HTS feed this back to clusters.  TD suggested that a checklist be made of all the issues with PLASC that Headteachers need to be aware of to ensure that schools do not lose funding because of issues with data. | All Headteachers |
| 3. | Budget Forum Membership | Russell Bailey was nominated by the Vale School Governors Association to represent Primary Schools on the Budget Forum.  There is still no representation from the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee. NM to speak to democratic and scrutiny services. | NM |
| 4. | Welsh Government Provisional Settlement for the 2017/18 Revenue Budget | NM presented the provisional settlement to the forum. It was noted that the Standard Spending assessment for education had been reduced by £37M across Wales and the IBA for the Vale had been reduced by over £1M.  There is no Minimum Funding Commitment for Schools and therefore Schools across Wales are no longer automatically protected from council cuts.  There has been a transfer out of the Settlement in relation to teachers EWC fees amounting to £43k. This £43k will be cut from the schools budget however schools will no longer be required to pay teachers EWC fees of £33 each. |  |
| 5. | Initial Revenue Budget Proposals for 2017/18 | NM Presented the initial revenue budget proposals to the forum. The report covers the 2016/17 budget monitoring position as well as the proposals for the 2017/18 budget.  The 2016/17 monitoring position was noted. Central education services are under financial pressure due to a decrease in OOC recoupment income from other Authorities of £822k and an increase in the independent and OOC placements budget of £268k. The Department has had to make use of Reserves in order to balance the 2016/17 budget.  **2017/18 Budget proposals**. The 2017/18 Council budget is not yet balanced and there remains a projected shortfall of £4.4M if all cost pressures are awarded.  The Learning and Skills Directorate have submitted cost pressures of over £2M which includes a £901k cost pressure for pay and price inflation in schools.  The Learning and Skills directorate has been tasked with finding savings of £796k in the 2017/18 financial Year. Whilst these savings are not a direct cut too schools, it was noted that schools are likely to be indirectly affected. |  |
| 6. | Initial Capital Proposals for 2017/18 | NM Presented the Initial Capital Proposals report to the forum. There is £75M in the programme for 21st Century Schools.  The programme is reliant on Welsh Government Grant, capital receipts as well as capital funding and reserves.  Submissions have been made to Welsh Government for 21st Century Band B projects. |  |
| 7. | Catering Delegation to Schools | **Primary Schools Catering Delegation**  The Catering budget will be delegated to Primary schools from April 2017. The delegated budget will be based on the Meal price multiplied by the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. Primary schools wishing to remain part of the Vale catering Services will indicate so in their catering SLA. In order to be a part of Vale Catering Services, schools will be requested to pay the amounts delegated in the budget over to the Vale catering services.  The biggest impact on Primary schools will be that primary schools will now be responsible for the collection of primary school meal income and will also be responsible for primary school debts. Primary schools will need to establish systems to monitor and control income and debts.  Carole Tyley has suggested that primary schools contact Vale catering services who will work with the schools to develop systems for income and debt control**. Primary representatives will need to feed this back to clusters.**  There is no transfer of retrospective debts to schools. Schools will only be responsible for debts accruing after 1st April 2017.  Carole Tyley has offered to attend cluster groups to answer any queries.  Schools will no longer receive income in respect of recharges for utilities however the floor area values in the schools funding formula have been adapted to take account of this.  **Secondary School Catering Delegation**  The catering budget is already delegated to secondary schools based on FSM eligibility and a client contribution.  The current proposal for the secondary sector is, schools that want to be part of Vale Catering will be asked to pay the whole amount delegated in their formula over to Vale Catering Services.  This is a change from the current arrangements and will require consultation with secondary Headteachers. VB is concerned over an inequality between schools opting out of catering services and schools opting in and believes that those opting out are financially advantaged by this proposed formula.  Carole Tyley has offered to attend cluster groups to answer queries. | All Primary representatives |
| 8. | Central South Consortium Budget Advisory Group | The CSC has worked with Local Authorities to establish a budget advisory group who will be consulted prior to financial papers regarding grant funding going to the directors for decisions. Each local authority will be represented on this group by a senior finance officer and a Budget Forum Headteacher. The representatives from the Vale are Tyrone Davies and Nicola Monckton.  As well as the opportunity to consult, this new process will ensure a more transparency in the allocation of grant funding to schools. |  |
| 9. | School balances scrutiny report | NM presented the scrutiny report on Schools Balances. Whilst balances have reduced year on year since 2011, there was an increase in the 2015/16 financial year and a number of schools are holding excessive balances in excess of 5%. |  |
| 10. | Annual Budget Forum meeting with the Leader | The meeting with the leader has been scheduled for 7th December, 8.30am, civic offices.  VB will prepare a presentation which will outline the financial pressures facing schools and the steps schools have taken to stay out of a deficit. | VB |
| 11. | Next Meeting dates | Next meetings to be held at Llantwit Major Comprehensive School at 8.30am  Wednesday 18th January 2017  Wednesday 15th March 2017 |  |